Setting up of Expert Panel

1626. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will (he Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to stale:

(a) whether his Ministry has requested the Finance Ministry to set up an expert panel to suggest a level playing field for the industry to compete globally; and

(b) if so, the response received thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (b) No, Sir. However, the representations received from the Shipping Industry and its Association, the Indian National Shipowners' Association, for grant of incentives to the Shipping Industry in order to have a level playing field to compete globally, arc examined from time to time inconsultation with Ministry of Finance.

Disabled allowance to handicapped

1627. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for payment of disabled allowance to the handicapped persons at least in the rural and hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh under the Social Security Act; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Under Social Security Pension Scheme, Disability Relief Allowance @Rs. 150/-p.m. is being provided to 12557 disabled persons in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

Juvenile Homes

1628. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Juvenile Justice Act is not good for children and juvenile homes are over-crowded;

(b) whether it is also a fact that recently the upper age limit of children in homes has been increased from 16 to 18 in a convention held in Delhi; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to redraft the Act as also to increase the number and capacity of juvenile homes?